STATEMENT BY

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Before

THE FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

FOR THE 2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE

TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

CLUSTER II - SPECIFIC ISSUE

REGIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING WITH RESPECT TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF

THE 1995 MIDDLE EAST RESOLUTION

8 MAY 2012

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr. Chairman,

The Middle East has and will continue to have a special status within the NPT framework and its Review Process. Indeed, the indefinite extension of the Treaty at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference was only possible in the context of the overall package arrived at, comprising three decisions and one crucial resolution; namely, the Resolution on the Middle East.

Egypt reiterates that the Resolution called upon all States in the Middle East that had not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and place their nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards, as well as called for the early establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This has also been emphasized by numerous relevant UN Security Council, General Assembly and IAEA Resolutions, some of which date back four decades ago. Today, seventeen years after the 1995 Middle East Resolution, Israel remains the only State in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty or placed its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards, and no tangible results on the ground have been achieved in terms of the Resolution's implementation and the early establishment of the envisaged Zone.

This is despite the fact that the 1995 Resolution called upon all States party to the NPT, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, "to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts" in this regard. The 2010 Review Conference's action plan on the Middle East also emphasized the special responsibility in this regard of the five nuclear-weapon States, and especially the three Depositary States which co-sponsored the 1995 Resolution.

The Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences reaffirmed the importance of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and recognized that it remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved. Indeed, the vital importance of the 1995 Resolution within the NPT framework was emphasized by the fact that it constituted the subject of one of the four action plans adopted by the 2010 Review Conference, alongside the other action plans dealing with the three pillars of the Treaty.

The 2010 Action Plan acknowledged the long delay that has taken place with regards to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution, by stating that the Review Conference "regrets that little progress has been achieved towards the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East". Indeed, the resolution's implementation has been long overdue, which therefore makes its implementation a matter of urgency.
Mr. Chairman,

The 2010 Review Conference's fourth action plan emphasized the importance of a process leading to full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and to that end - the Conference endorsed a number of practical steps. Among these steps was the convening – by the Secretary General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution, in consultation with the States of the region – of a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Egypt welcomes the designation of Finland as host Government for the 2012 Conference and the appointment of H.E. Jaakko Laajava as facilitator, whom we look forward to continuing to work with in this regard in accordance with his mandate as stipulated under the 2010 Action Plan.

Egypt reaffirms that the 2012 Conference is of course not an end in itself, but must launch a sustained and serious process towards the full implementation of the 1995 resolution, leading to the establishment of the Zone, and involving concrete steps and measures to be taken in this regard within specific time-frames, and linked to the successive sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 Review Process of the Treaty. Indeed, the 2010 action plan envisages the 2012 Conference as a means to that end, and hence stipulated "follow-on steps agreed by the participating regional states at the 2012 Conference", which the facilitator will assist in their implementation. The action plan also stressed that the 2012 Conference shall take as its terms of reference the 1995 Resolution.

The convening of a successful conference in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is integral to the implementation of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. Any delay in convening the conference in the year of 2012 – as clearly stipulated in the 2010 action plan which was reached by consensus – will jeopardize its overall implementation and represent a major setback in this regard.

This first session of the Preparatory Committee in Vienna should pave the way for the prompt finalization of all pending procedural matters pertaining to the convening of the 2012 Conference by the UN Secretary General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution. Furthermore, there should soon be an announcement of the dates of the 2012 conference, in order to enable appropriate preparation by participating States, finalization of the Conference's agenda and structure, and preparation of background documentation as stipulated by the Action Plan, as well as the provision of the necessary financing, through the fund created by the host Government - Finland - and through operationalising the UN Trust Fund that has been the subject of discussions in the aftermath of the 2010 Review Conference.

Following this first session of the Preparatory Committee, there will be a need to enter directly into a phase of substantive and procedural preparation for the 2012 Conference itself, and thus there will be a need to intensify consultations with participating States,
which will require additional efforts in the period from now until the date of the Conference with a view to making it a success. Hence, there is a need to form a mechanism for substantive and procedural preparation for the 2012 Conference and follow-up of progress achieved, through an ad hoc preparatory group.

Good preparation of the substantive and procedural issues related to the convening of the 2012 Conference will contribute to its success in achieving its objectives, namely the implementation of the 1995 Middle East Resolution by means of an ongoing process as stipulated in (Paragraph 7 of) the fourth action plan of the 2010 Final Document. This process is inextricably linked to the 2015 Review Cycle.

The Process Phase in follow up to the 2012 Conference requires a clear road map containing concrete goals which are time bound, and linked to the successive sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 Review Process of the Treaty, towards achieving the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The road map would be reviewed by each of the successive sessions of the Preparatory Committee based on the reports to be presented by the facilitator. Evaluation of the States Parties to the NPT regarding the progress made towards establishing the zone should be an integral part of any outcome documents of the successive sessions of the Preparatory Committee within the framework of the 2015 Review Process of the Treaty.

It is important in this regard that the convening of the 2012 Conference result in a continuation of its sessions on a regular basis under the supervision of the UN Secretary General and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, with the objective of launching a negotiating process at the Conference in order to conclude an internationally and effectively-verifiable treaty for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The 2010 Action Plan further recognized the important role played by civil society in contributing to implementation of the 1995 Resolution and encourages all efforts in this regard. Indeed, it is important to take into account the strong supportive positions of civil society throughout the Middle East and the world towards the implementation of the 1995 Resolution and the establishment of the Zone, as well as the ideas that civil society can contribute to that end.

Egypt emphasizes that the 2010 Action Plan also called upon all States to refrain from undertaking any measures that preclude the achievement of the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

As previously reaffirmed, there is a special responsibility on the nuclear-weapon States, especially the Depositary States that co-sponsored the 1995 Resolution, to implement the Resolution. Moreover, the implementation of the 2010 fourth Action Plan is a collective responsibility; Indeed, the Action Plan stipulated that the "States parties renew their resolve to undertake, individually and collectively, all necessary measures aimed at its [the 1995 Resolution] prompt implementation.

The 2010 Action Plan also reaffirmed that all States parties to the Treaty, particularly the nuclear-weapon States and the States in the region, should continue to report on steps taken to implement the 1995 Resolution to the 2015 Review Conference and its

preparatory committee meetings. It is essential that the successive sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference conduct a substantive discussion of these reports, with a view to, inter alia, drawing lessons for the best means of implementing the obligations pertaining to the Middle East under the Treaty and the Final Documents of its Review Conferences.

Egypt's efforts and steps taken to implement the 1995 Resolution are well-known and documented over the past years. Indeed, Egypt's active engagement in this regard has continued recently, including through the implementation of the 2010 fourth Action Plan;

Egypt has submitted a working paper in this regard to this current Preparatory Committee session, entitled "Implementation of the 1995 Resolution and the 2000 and 2010 outcomes on the Middle East" [NPT/CONF.2015/PC.I/WP.13], which elaborates further Egypt's position and views on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The success of the 2012 Conference will be crucial to the success of the current NPT Review Cycle and its outcome will have a significant bearing on future developments in the Middle East. Indeed, the revolutionary developments in the Arab world have rendered the current nuclear situation in the Middle East more untenable.

It is long overdue that concrete progress is made towards the implementation of the 1995 Resolution. Its implementation is not only a legal obligation on all those responsible, but also presents – including through the 2012 Conference - an opportunity that is key to resolving the prevailing tensions surrounding the current nuclear situation in the region, through a balanced and comprehensive approach encompassing the main parties concerned.

The recent Arab Summit in Baghdad (29 March) emphasized that the 2012 Conference represents a crossroads for the Arab countries' policies in the nuclear domain, and that its failure would invite them to revise their policies in this regard.

Thank you Mr. Chairman